Saint Paul Planning Commission City Hall Conference Center 15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Minutes July 10, 2009

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, July 10, 2009, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Mmes. Faricy, Lu, Morton, Thao, Wencl; and

Present: Messrs. Alton, Barrera, Bellus, Commers, Gordon, Johnson, Kramer, Schertler,

and Ward.

Commissioners Mmes. *Donnelly-Cohen, *Porter, *Smitten, and Messrs. *Goodlow,

*Margulies, *Nelson, and *Spaulding.

Absent:

*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Administrator; Patricia James, Kate Reilly and

Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes June 19, 2009

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Barrera moved approval of the minutes of June 19, 2009. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Alton announced that Commissioner Barrera is resigning as a member of the Planning Commission effective tomorrow, due to a professional change requiring him to move to California. Chair Alton read a resolution honoring Commissioner Barrera for his service on the Commission.

Eduardo Barrera thanked the Commission and made a few comments.

MOTION: Commissioner Bellus moved approval of the resolution honoring Commissioner Barrera. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion.

III. Planning Administrator's Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that on June 24, 2009 the City Council adopted the District 2 Plan Summary, which will be a part of the Comprehensive Plan. Also at City Council on July 1, 2009 were two items related to the property at 388 Como Avenue. The Planning Commission had approved an application for an enlargement of nonconforming use for auto salvage, auto repair, auto body repair, and outdoor auto sales. The approval was appealed by the Department of Public Works because the property is needed for the extension of Pierce Butler Route. The City Council approved the final order for acquisition of the property and upheld the appeal on votes of 6-0.

IV. Zoning Committee

Commissioner Morton reported that the Zoning Committee did not have a meeting on July 2, 2009, but they will be meeting on July 16th with two items of business on the agenda.

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee

No report, as the meeting was canceled.

VI. Neighborhood Planning Committee

<u>District 9/Fort Road Federation Plan Summary</u> – Resolution recommending adoption as an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan. (*Kate Reilly, 651/266-6618*)

Kate Reilly, PED staff, said that the Committee had done very good work on meeting the needs of the Planning Commission as well as the needs of the Community Council. The Community Council had an opportunity to comment on the Neighborhood Committee's revisions and they had no concerns with the changes that were made.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Wencl moved the Neighborhood Planning Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution for the District 9/Fort Road Federation Plan Summary recommending that the City Council adopt it as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

VII. <u>Emerald Ash Borer Infestation</u> – Presentation by Cy Kosel, Natural Resources Manager, Parks Department. (*Donna Drummond*, 651/266-6556)

Cy Kosel distributed and put on a table several informational brochures about the Emerald Ash Borer along with a copy of the Emerald Ash Borer Management Program proposal. Mr. Kosel is with the Department of Parks and Recreation and gave a power point presentation about the Emerald Ash Borer infestation that has recently entered Saint Paul. The presentation is the same that had been given by the director of Parks and Recreation to the City Council on June 17, 2009. It is a proposed management plan for the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation. It has been presented to the City Council, but at this time the City Council has not yet voted to accept it or decided how to pay for it. Mr. Kosel proceeded to summarize the main details of the management plan. He passed around some samples of the beetle bug and infested tree bark.

EAB was discovered in the United States in 2002 in Detroit, Michigan. It comes from eastern Asia, where ash trees are resistant to them. The Emerald Ash Borer kills all ash trees that are native to North America. Any place it has been found in the United States so far they have not found a way to eradicate it or get rid of it. Unfortunately these beetles do not have a natural predator in the United States.

Commissioner Schertler asked if any trees survive or is there 100% destruction?

Mr. Kosel said that there are no survivors once a tree is infected, the exception is if the tree has been treated with pesticides. It takes about two to three years to kill a tree, once the infestation is

large enough where there are enough larvae in a tree to kill it. In the early stages, where we are at, it might take a little longer. Mr. Kosel said this will be a huge issue for the state of Minnesota. It just happened to start in Saint Paul so Saint Paul is in the spot light. Minnesota has the second highest number of ash trees in the nation, behind the state of Maine, having 940 million ash trees throughout the state. Once this starts to get outside the metro area, and gets up to the northern part of the state where there are 800 million ash trees, this will be a huge issue for the Department of Natural Resources and the forestry industry in Minnesota.

It is important to remove the Emerald Ash Borer before the weather is such that the beetles start emerging from the trees and populating more trees and laying more eggs. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) exercised it emergency powers under state statute and asked the City of Saint Paul to remove infected trees in Saint Anthony Park. Sixty-eight trees were removed; thirty-four were on public boulevards and thirty-four were on private property. Also, there were no funds to remove them and so the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the MDA agreed to pay for the removal of those trees on private property.

Commissioner Ward asked if in the process of removing the dead or infected trees, do the larvae survive? What happens to them?

Mr. Kosel said the larvae need the ash tree to continue to grow and eventually turn into the beetle. They do not go from larvae into beetles, they need to have the tree bark to go into and transform into the second and third stages. Once they are out of the tree they die. Another issue is if a tree is removed and a stump is still there, the stump still has living roots. A stump can regrow and send out shoots, so it is important also to remove the stump. There are several possible approaches: 1) Remove the stump completely and grind it up. 2) If it can not be removed, then it should be treated with pesticides to kill any living tissue in the stump. 3) If the first two cannot be done then try to debark the stump down below the ground level.

Commissioner Gordon asked if chemical treatment saves the trees.

Mr. Kosel said yes it has been found that chemical treatment can kill larvae in a tree and save the tree. However, trees must continue to be treated for the life of the tree. Lots of people want to push chemical treatment, but the long term effects are not known, such as what happens when a tree has been pumped with chemicals for fifteen or twenty years.

Chair Alton asked if ash trees were planted after elm trees were lost due to Dutch Elm disease.

Mr. Kosel said that when elm trees were lost by the thousands in the 1970s, people were looking for replacement trees. The ash tree is fairly fast growing, has a nice upright canopy, and seemed very resistant to disease and tolerant of the conditions in the city from road salt and traffic. At the time it seemed like the perfect tree. The ash tree was over planted. In Saint Paul over 30% of trees on public property are ash, which is a high number. A city should only have 15 to 20% of a particular species of tree, but depending on the climate that can be hard to do.

Commissioner Schertler said that they must have a budget for or anticipate a certain die off every year for trees on public property. How many trees are removed in a typical year and how many more will need to be removed?

Mr. Kosel replied that in a typical year about 2,500 trees are removed due to storms or disease.

Since the EAB problem started 68 trees have been removed this year. By the end of the year it will be approximately 100, and next year it will grow to about 200, and the next 400, and eventually it could be 1,000. Part of the proposed Parks plan is a structured removal plan, trying to get ahead of it as much as possible.

Commissioner Schertler asked about stump removal, who pays if it is on the boulevard, the private property owner or the city?

Mr. Kosel said that there have been a variety of stump removal programs. For about five or six years there was a program administered by the district councils, where the City would pay half and the property owner would pay half. The City Council said this is not working, and the City needs to go back to stump removal. In about 2003 Parks and Recreation received money to remove stumps, but it was just a one time allocation. Unfortunately, there is not enough money for stump removal and tree trimming, so stump removal has been scaled back.

In the proposed Parks plan, the City would allocate funds to remove infested trees and stumps and to replant over time. This will be over and above the regular budget for tree maintenance. Mr. Kosel said that they want to implement a long-term structured removal plan, addressing about 3,000 trees a year. If that was done it would take 20 years to get rid of all the ash trees and replant. It was made clear to the City Council that Parks cannot be expected to take care of EAB with their current resources unless they divert or reprioritize what they are doing. The City has to decide if they want to deal with this, because additional funding would be needed.

For more information the EAB website is: http://www.emeraldashborer.infor

VIII. Communications Committee

No report.

IX. Task Force Reports

Commissioner Wencl reported on the airport zoning study, saying that the proposed zoning ordinance by the Joint Airport Zoning Board would limit the height of structures and vegetation for two miles on the northwest, southeast, east and west sides of the airport, and out 1½ miles in all the other areas. There is a Zone A, Zone B and a Zone C, with different regulations for each. On Thursday July 23, 2009 there is an open house and a public hearing at the Saint Paul Downtown Airport Terminal. Written comments must be submitted by July 30th.

Chair Alton asked if there is a good understanding of how these regulations would relate to or interact with the City of Saint Paul zoning ordinance.

Commissioner Wencl said under the proposed airport zoning ordinance as it is set up, applications would be made to the zoning administrators in each of the jurisdictions of Saint Paul, West Saint Paul and South Saint Paul. If there was an appeal to a zoning administrator's decision, a board of adjustment of Metropolitan Airport Commission members would make a decision on the appeal.

Commission Gordon questioned whether this was a "get around ordinance" so that MAC would not have to worry about the City enforcing its zoning code or other ordinances with respect to

projects involved at that airport. Commissioner Gordon thinks this is something to be very concerned about.

Commissioner Wencl said the first ordinance that the Metropolitan Airports Commission had been working on was for MSP, the major airport in the area. Saint Paul is now the first local airport that they are preparing an ordinance for, and they intend to prepare zoning ordinances for each one of the Metropolitan Airports Commission airports.

Donna Drummond said that Allen Lovejoy has been following this from a staff perspective and she is going to talk to him and see if he recommends that the Planning Commission consider submitting formal written comments that could be submitted by the July 30th deadline. Such written comments could be considered at the next Planning Commission meeting on July 24th.

X.	Old Business	
	None	
XI.	New Business	
	None	
XII.	Adjournment	
	Meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.	
Recorded by: Angela Simons, Administrative Assistant and prepared by: Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary Planning and Economic Development Department, City of Saint Paul Respectfully submitted,		Approved(Date)
Donna Drummond Planning Administrator		Marilyn Porter Secretary of the Planning Commission